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President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Imnadze (Georgia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/69/722/Add.6)

The Acting President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/69/722/Add.6, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/69/722/Add.5, Grenada has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/69/722/Add.6?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 69 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/69/L.66)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 69 in order to take action on draft resolution A/69/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Nepal". Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on agenda item 69 and its sub-items (a) to (c) at its 69th and 70th plenary meetings, on 11 and 12 December 2014.

I thank all present for attending this important meeting on the urgent humanitarian situation affecting Nepal and the surrounding region following the devastating earthquake of 25 April and the subsequent earthquake of 12 May.

I express my deepest condolences to all those who have been affected by this terrible tragedy, including the families of those who lost their lives in Nepal, India, China and Bangladesh.

I commend the leadership demonstrated by the Government of Nepal and its steadfast efforts to address this challenging situation. I also thank all Member States, including the neighbouring countries, and the organizations that have responded to the crisis.

Nearly three weeks after the initial earthquake, the situation in Nepal remains of grave concern. In many places, the conditions on the ground are dire, with relief efforts suffering a serious setback following the second earthquake earlier this week. While long-term recovery and rehabilitation efforts will play a crucial role in rebuilding Nepal, there are immediate concerns that warrant the full support of the international community.

First, the humanitarian needs in the country are urgent and significant. With some 2.8 million displaced

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people, the provision of shelter is of the utmost importance. Every effort must be made to ensure that people living in open spaces have access to basic shelter as soon as possible. Many of the displaced also need food assistance as a vital necessity.

Secondly, access to health care, sanitation and hygiene services are critical priorities that must be addressed. As we have learned from similar natural disasters, increases in mortality, morbidity and outbreaks of communicable diseases can be prevented through access to basic health care and clean water. It is critical to improve sanitation and hygiene services in order to avoid potential outbreaks of cholera and diarrhoea, so as to prevent a second wave of fatalities.

Thirdly, beyond the needs of urban centres, people displaced from rural villages need to be able to return to their homes before the start of the planting season. Failing to enable people to return to their respective villages to plant crops could have severe consequences for the country's food security.

Finally, as we coordinate our relief efforts, we must bear in mind that there is only a small window of opportunity to assist the affected communities. With the monsoon season set to start in June, it is of the utmost importance that a comprehensive relief effort be launched as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Since the initial earthquake, the international community has put forth tremendous efforts to support the people of Nepal. Within hours of the disaster, neighbouring countries and other nations around the world deployed substantial assets, personnel and relief supplies. To date, more than 40 Member States have pledged support to the Nepal earthquake flash appeal launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, while dozens more have provided in-kind assistance and personnel, field hospitals, blankets and urban search-and-rescue teams. I commend all those who have demonstrated solidarity with the people and the Government of Nepal in the wake of this horrific disaster. I urge their continued support going forward.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Over the past three weeks, the lives of 8 million Nepalese people have been changed beyond recognition. First, an earthquake of magnitude 7.8 struck on 25 April, leaving some 8,000 people dead and more than double that number injured. A little more than two weeks later, a second earthquake struck on 12 May, of magnitude 7.3. That powerful tremor killed dozens of people and injured more than 2,000. I would like to express my sincere condolences to everyone who lost beloved family members, friends or colleagues.

A disaster of this scale affects every community and every sector of society. Some 400,000 homes were destroyed and another 280,000 damaged. Hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless and in urgent need of emergency shelter, food, clean water and health care. The earthquakes affected 39 of Nepal's 75 districts. Some of the hardest-hit villages are in the most remote locations, on top of Nepal's beautiful and majestic mountains. Sadly, the number of people killed is still rising as aid workers reach those communities.

The Government of Nepal has led the response effort, and the Nepal Armed Forces have played a key role in locating people in remote areas who have been cut off from help. During the initial days, the Nepalese army search-and-rescue teams evacuated more than 2,400 people from isolated communities to Kathmandu and Pokhara. The army mobilized some 10,000 troops to support the relief operation. We deployed a United Nations disaster assessment coordination team within 24 hours to support the Government's efforts. Among other things, the team helped to coordinate the arrival and deployment of 76 search-and-rescue teams from 31 countries, which arrived in the next few days. More than 1,870 rescue and medical personnel and almost 120 search dogs were involved. I thank all the countries and organizations that sent support in those vital hours after the earthquake struck, including the States members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the European Union and other multilateral institutions.

Nearly three weeks since the first earthquake, international search-and-rescue personnel and medical teams are now leaving Nepal, but humanitarian operations are intensifying. Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos has just returned from the disaster zone. Relief goods are entering the country more quickly. Aid routes are becoming more accessible. Humanitarian agencies and their partners are relying on the resilience of local communities. They are working at the local level to get help to the most vulnerable. They are using every means possible to reach communities that are cut off from transportation networks. Members of the Nepal Trekkers Association are climbing to the most remote communities to distribute relief materials where

there is no access by road or air. Overall, more than 1 million people have been reached with food, and some 350,000 have been provided with clean water. More than 150,000 families have been provided with emergency shelter materials. Emergency health teams are present across the country. Medical tents have been provided to many of the 26 hospitals and more than 900 health centres that were damaged. Humanitarian aid is making a difference, but we need to do more.

With the monsoon season starting in June, there is an urgent need to make sure that nearly half a million people have emergency shelter before the rains start in earnest. Heavy rain and hail are already affecting people living in tents. The monsoon season is also the planting season. If farmers are unable to prepare their land and plant their fields, next year's harvest will be severely affected. The monsoon season will also increase the danger of cholera and other water-borne diseases. Some areas of Nepal have lost almost all their water and sanitation facilities. There is a real danger that heavy rains could result in a major epidemic.

I cannot stress enough the importance of getting aid, including clean water and sanitation supplies, to everyone in need within the next few weeks. Support is also urgently needed to generate emergency employment, promote local economic recovery and ensure livelihood support. Even as we deal with those pressing needs, we must look ahead. mindful of the continuum from emergency assistance to support for recovery and development. Emergency relief is never enough. Saving people's lives is important, but people must also be able to sustain their livelihoods. They want a future. Cash interventions and emergency employment offer interim support, but efforts to stimulate small and medium enterprises, and to use locally sourced skills and materials, will have long-reaching benefits.

Nepal has been torn apart. Years of development gains have been wiped out. Tens of thousands of people who had been brought out of poverty are at risk of falling back. Basic social services, in particular health care and education, have been interrupted. The housing sector, power generation, communications and tourism have all suffered badly. There are clear lessons emerging about building risk awareness and reduction into the reconstruction effort.

Discussions among the Government, the European Union, the development banks and the United Nations are already under way and plans for an initial post-disaster needs assessment are in progress. This assessment, covering both the economic and social losses, will bring partners together behind a single, Government-led recovery plan. Experience has shown that the post-disaster period is an opportunity to reassess vulnerabilities and to build back better. Our efforts in Nepal, therefore, must be ambitious, long-term and risk-informed if they are to protect against future losses.

This is the first major natural disaster to strike since the international agreement on disaster risk reduction was reached in Sendai in March. A key component of that agreement was a commitment to undertake a resilient recovery approach in the event of a disaster. We must now support Nepal in translating this new global framework into action. I am pleased and encouraged by the solidarity shown by Member States to Nepal at this critical time. I appreciate the General Assembly's efforts to help the people of Nepal cope with their devastating loss. The flash appeal launched on 28 April calls for $423 million to support the people of Nepal through the immediate life-saving response phase. I want to thank all Member States that have contributed so far. However, without more robust support, more lives will be lost.

The appeal is currently only 14 per cent funded, at about $60 million. This includes $15 million allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund. An additional $365 million is urgently needed. Needless to say, the 14 per cent funding is far from sufficient. Let us resolve to do more and better. We are overwhelmed by an unprecedented number of humanitarian challenges around the world. Humanitarian partners urgently need funds to be able to do their work. In Nepal, we have an opportunity to make a real difference in the next weeks and months. With Member States' continued help, the United Nations and our partners will support the people of Nepal as they recover and rebuild. I count on their strong support and leadership.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Spain to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.66.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for convening this plenary meeting on the aftermath of the earthquake, or rather I should say the earthquakes, that have devastated Nepal and affected several neighbouring countries since 25 April.

I am making this statement in my national capacity, but Spain aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union.

First and foremost, I wish to pay my heartfelt respects to the memory of the victims and convey my condolences and support to their families and other loved ones. I also wish to express solidarity, hope and confidence in the ability of the people and Government of Nepal to overcome these dire circumstances. They know they are not alone. We stand with Nepal in word and we should stand with them even more, if possible, in deed.

We must all respond as best we can to the call of the Secretary-General and be generous to Nepal. Its tragedy, which we all feel as our own, could at any time be our own because all of us in one way or another are exposed to natural disasters of similar magnitude. The feelings of solidarity, hope and confidence to which I alluded are what led my country and my delegation, in full cooperation with Nepal, to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.66 to the Assembly today for its consideration and action. I am sure it will be strongly supported.

The preamble of the draft resolution begins by expressing our condolences for the more than 8,000 who died as a result of the earthquake of 25 April and its after shocks. According to recent data, there are more than 18,000 wounded and nearly 3 million internally displaced persons. In total, more than 8 million people are in need of assistance, many of them in hard-to-reach areas. Given the scope of the disaster, could it have been otherwise? The entire social and economic fabric of Nepal has been affected, and more than 20 per cent of the country's economy has disappeared.

The draft resolution also recalls that Nepal has special needs and is particularly vulnerable at this time for various reasons. It is vulnerable not only because it is geographically located on a powerful earthquake fault line, but also because it is a landlocked developing country and is still emerging from conflict. Nepal is special above all because of its immense natural attractions and its extraordinary contributions to the cultural and spiritual heritage of humankind. This makes it an undeniable tourist attraction. However, that wealth is at the same time a source of vulnerability, when, as has happened, an important part of its most iconic monuments and natural parks have been seriously damaged by the earthquake. Therefore, the operative part of the draft resolution reminds us of the need to combine the immediate rescue and rehabilitation efforts with medium- and long-term reconstruction and development efforts.

The experience of the United Nations and its main humanitarian and development agencies in this field are and will be crucial. We also underscore that mitigation and preparation efforts made before such disasters occur can prevent their effects from being even greater. In this connection, the draft resolution also refers to the relevance of the Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

The draft resolution is thus not only timely but also necessary. It was in that conviction that we submitted it to the Assembly for adoption. I must say that the decision to submit the draft resolution came directly from my Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, who was in the region when the earthquake struck on 25 April. His first reaction was to make his official aeroplane available to those who needed it and to mobilize Spanish cooperation. In doing so, he expressed the feelings of Spanish society as a whole — a society that has repeatedly demonstrated its empathy and solidarity with those who suffer most. His second reaction was to instruct us to be in immediate contact with and to make ourselves available to the Nepalese Mission in order to jointly push forward this draft resolution, as an expression of our support to that friendly country and to encourage rescue, reconstruction and ongoing development efforts. We have done this extremely quickly, as the occasion demanded, with the active participation and cooperation of many delegations and the Secretariat itself.

We have been able to prepare and present to the Assembly the draft we now have before us. We are sincerely grateful for the excellent job done by the experts on humanitarian issues from all the delegations, beginning with my own mission's splendid team. This is an achievement for all of us that demonstrates that at times such as these we can act as what we are, a truly United Nations, united in the face of the adversity confronting one of us, in compassion and in action.

I would like to share the fact that so far today's draft resolution has been sponsored by more than 110 countries. There is still time for those that have not yet become sponsors to do so, but they should hurry, because every vote for it sends a message of life and hope to the people of Nepal. We owe it to them and to ourselves.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Nepal".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Pollard (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/69/L.66, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Belarus, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Fiji, France, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lichtenstein, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nigeria, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Senegal, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.66?

Draft resolution A/69/L.66 was adopted (resolution 69/280).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union to make a statement.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and you, Sir, for presiding over today's meeting on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

What all of us here today are saying to the Government and the people of Nepal is that they are not alone. Today the General Assembly has adopted resolution 69/280, proposed jointly by Nepal and one of the EU's member States, Spain. The remaining 27 EU member States are sponsors of the resolution, which also has massive support among the rest of the United Nations membership. At moments like this, such initiatives are tangible proof of global solidarity and an expression of our common humanity.

The earthquake has killed more than 8,000 people, wounded 18,000, displaced 2.8 million and affected as many 8 million Nepalis. It has caused immense material damage, not only to the country's rich cultural heritage but also to housing, health-care centres, schools and other key parts of its infrastructure. Nepal needs more than our expressions of sympathy. The other message of the EU and its member States is one of continued concrete support to the country in every possible way that can help it help overcome the earthquake's devastating effects.

We started by supporting Nepal in the immediate aftermath of the disaster by sending first-response teams, with the EU and 16 of our member States contributing search-and-rescue teams and other experts and assets through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. We are now also supporting Nepal in its immense humanitarian relief effort. European Union Commissioner Christos Stylianides visited Nepal with United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos just a few days after the disaster, with €6 million for humanitarian relief and with teams from the European Commission's Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection on the ground to help identify needs and prepare and monitor our support.

We are determined, with our partners, to help the Nepalese authorities address the priority needs of the affected population, such as emergency shelter, food assistance and health care. Some of the initial challenges to delivery, such as improving the airport's operational capacity and facilitating customs procedures, have been successfully addressed. The remaining challenges include optimizing the use of foreign military assets, particularly airlift capacity. It is urgent that the emergency humanitarian response be scaled up so that it can reach remote villages beyond district centres, where there are large areas that have still not been accessed in what some are already describing as a rural disaster. In providing aid, we must take into account the specific assistance and protection needs of women and men of all ages and particularly women and children's

vulnerability to gender-based violence and trafficking. Adequate support must reach people in need before the monsoon season.

In parallel, the EU and its member States will continue supporting Nepal in its recovery and reconstruction process as well as its long-term development. We expect the post-disaster needs assessment to start soon, and that should help us to better identify some of the needs and priorities for national and international support. The EU has already appropriated €16.6 million for recovery and reconstruction on top of significant contributions from individual EU member States. We support Nepal in its commitment to recovery. We also support the country's determination to strengthen its resilience and capacity at all levels to withstand and recover from future disasters of this kind. Finally, we also support Nepal in its commitment to making the drafting of a constitution a priority, thus contributing to its longer-term stability, which is another crucial condition for lasting recovery and development.

I would like to end by commending Nepal on the leadership demonstrated by its authorities and the resilience demonstrated by its people. We realize that its remaining needs are huge. But the EU and its member States will be there with both humanitarian and development instruments for as long as it takes to help the people of Nepal, including by providing our share of the international effort in a possible future pledging conference.

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that such explanations are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. Mukerji (India): Let me join other delegations in conveying our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal, who have endured large-scale devastation in the aftermath of a massive earthquake on 25 April and several aftershocks. While we share the grief of the people of Nepal, we are gratified to see the international community rise to the occasion and assist in alleviating the suffering faced by the people of Nepal. Today's adoption of resolution 69/280 is an expression of this strong support, and we are happy to be one of its sponsors.

India has been responding to several global humanitarian relief operations in keeping with our resources and capabilities. We were at the forefront of providing support after the Asian tsunami, extending assistance in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster, contributing to the Ebola Trust Fund and evacuating Indians, as well as many foreign nationals, from war-torn Yemen recently. We have endeavoured to be the early responders in cases of humanitarian crisis.

We are united with Nepal by history and a border, an open border. The courage with which the people of Nepal have handled the situation shows the vitality of the people of that country. Our Prime Minister has visited Nepal twice since assuming office around a year ago. The visit of our Prime Minister in August 2014 further strengthened the broad spectrum of political, economic, social and cultural ties that are deep-rooted at the levels of both the Government and the people. In many ways, the destinies of our countries are interlinked, and therefore we feel the pain of our Nepalese brethren even more. Our Prime Minister spoke with both the President and Prime Minister of Nepal soon after the earthquake occurred. The relief and rescue work provided by India was done in consultation and coordination with the Nepalese Government.

As a close friend and neighbour, we launched Operation Maitri, which means "friendship" in both Nepali and Hindi, to aid the rescue and relief efforts in Nepal. The Government of India swiftly swung into action after the devastating earthquake by immediately dispatching National Disaster Response Force teams and special aircraft with rescue and relief materials. The relief efforts from India were guided by a national crisis-management committee, chaired by the Prime Minister of India and continuously monitored by a committee of senior Government officials.

Special flights were launched with teams from our National Disaster Response Force with rescue and relief materials. The first flight was dispatched with relief materials within four hours of the earthquake. There were 37 non-stop sorties of C-17 Globemaster, IL-76 and C-130 aircrafts carrying 550 tons of relief material. Thirteen helicopters of the Indian army were operating from Kathmandu and Pokhara. We deployed 16 teams of the National Disaster Response Force comprising over 700 trained personnel and 18 army engineering teams. It was not just the Government; 650 trucks carrying 5,000 tons of relief material were also sent by non-governmental organizations and state governments.

With regard to medical assistance, the Indian army set up three field hospitals, and the Air Force deployed

a rapid-action team. Our medical personnel comprises surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and technicians drawn from all our premier hospitals. A national trauma center with five operation theatres was operationalized by the team sent by our Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. We have provided medical supplies, stretchers and oxygen concentrators. We have helped with the restoration of the electricity supply and have made an operational query-based single database of missing persons.

Finally, we would like to mention that we are also closely engaged with the efforts of the United Nations in Nepal. Now that the search-and-rescue phase is over, our commitment extends to partnering with the Government and the people of Nepal for rehabilitation and reconstruction. In conclusion, I would like to quote our honourable Prime Minister's words: "India will make all efforts to wipe the tears of every person in Nepal, hold their hands and stand with them".

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting and Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his briefing. We extend our sincere condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Nepal and express appreciation to the countries, regional and international organizations and all other parties that have been actively participating in and supporting the rescue and relief efforts in Nepal.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 69/280, initiated by Nepal and Spain and sponsored by China and a large number of other countries to express support for Nepal, shows the solidarity of the international community in jointly overcoming the disaster. The strong earthquake on 25 April and its aftershocks have inflicted heavy human and economic losses on Nepal and severely damaged its economic and social development and infrastructure. As a least developed, landlocked developing country, Nepal is in urgent need of emergency international support as well as sustained support and assistance, reconstruction and long-term development.

While working to meet the urgent needs of the disaster-affected population, the international community should support the Nepalese Government's priority goals in disaster prevention, recovery and reconstruction, help improve Nepal's disaster resistance and ensure the effective coordination of international efforts with Nepal's national endeavours.

Nepal is a close and friendly neighbour to China. Our two peoples are like brothers. The Chinese Government and people share the pain of the Nepalese people. Immediately after the disaster struck, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang sent messages of condolence to their Nepalese counterparts to express the solidarity of the Chinese Government and people with the Nepalese Government and people, and our readiness to provide all possible assistance to rescue and relief efforts.

The Chinese international rescue team, the Chinese Government medical team and the Chinese military rescue and relief and medical teams arrived in Nepal shortly after the quake and immediately started work in the areas of search and rescue, medical treatment, epidemic prevention and control, and personnel training. More than 1,000 rescue, medical, epidemic prevention and control, and training pesonnel from the Chinese Government, military and police are working in Nepal, carrying out the largest international humanitarian rescue and relief operation outside China since the founding of the People's Republic.

After the earthquake, the Chinese Government promptly announced two batches of emergency humanitarian aid to Nepal totaling ¥60 million, or about $10 million. More than 40 military flights were dispatched, delivering 650 tons of tents, generators, water-purification equipment, blankets and other emergency supplies to Nepal. When Nepal was struck by a strong aftershock on 12 May, the Chinese Government announced another batch of emergency aid totaling ¥80 million, or about $13 million. Supplies are being collected and arranged and will reach disaster-stricken areas as soon as possible.

In addition, many provincial governments; non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross Society of China, the Chinese Foundation for Poverty Alleviation and Blue Sky rescue and relief team; and enterprises and individual citizens in China all provided donations in cash and in kind, which fully demonstrated the broad and solid social foundation for China-Nepal friendship.

The Chinese Government will maintain close communication with the Nepalese Government to get updates about the disaster situation and the requirements on the ground and on that basis provide help in various forms for medical treatment, epidemic prevention and control, temporary relocation of the disaster-affected people and post-disaster reconstruction.

We are convinced that with the help of the international community, the Nepalese Government and people will surely overcome the disaster and rebuild their homes.

Mr. Erdman (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I would like to express our deepest condolences to all those affected by the earthquake in Nepal, including the families of those in Nepal, both Nepalese and visitors, who died or were injured in the earthquake and its aftermath. There are no words adequate to express our sense of loss.

We are working closely with the Government of Nepal and the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance and support. The United States commends the emergency and medical responders from Nepal, the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations around the world who have courageously stepped up to help those most in need. We especially remember today — and extend condolences to their families — those courageous responders who have given their own lives in the service of aiding their fellow human beings.

Our disaster assistance response team and urban search-and-rescue personnel, along with the United States military, have joined the response efforts and have been helping to search for and rescue survivors, provide logistics, conduct medical evacuations and aerial surveys and airlift plastic sheeting and medical supplies in support of the Government of Nepal and the international humanitarian effort. To date, the United States has pledged more than $32 million in humanitarian assistance. We will continue to assist Nepal during the emergency response phase and into the process of rebuilding and reconstruction.

The United States also remains committed to continuing our work with international organizations, the Government of Nepal and the Kathmandu-based National Society for Earthquake Technology on disaster risk-reduction strategies for disaster resilience. To the people in Nepal and the region affected by this tragedy, we send our heartfelt sympathies. The United States was a sponsor of the resolution adopted today (resolution 69/280), and we stand with Nepal during this difficult time.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I thank the President for convening today's meeting. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the situation in Nepal. And I would also like to express my gratitude to Spain for taking the initiative, together with Nepal, to introduce the resolution just adopted (resolution 69/280).

On behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, I would like to express our profound sympathy and deepest condolences to the people of Nepal for the lives lost and the destruction caused by the devastating earthquake. My sympathy and condolences also go to the neighbouring countries — Bangladesh, China and India — that were hit by the same earthquake.

The second earthquake, or aftershock, of 12 May showed that the people of Nepal still have to face the fear of earthquakes. Japan has in the past also experienced the devastation of innumerable earthquakes, most recently the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. We know very well that recovery and reconstruction from such a disaster is not an easy task and will require efforts over the long term. In our own experience, expressions of international solidarity are also very important.

At the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, the international community reaffirmed the importance of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building with the notion of "building back better". The resolution we have adopted today also clearly reflects this idea.

With regard to emergency humanitarian assistance, Japan dispatched disaster relief teams on 26 April, one day after the earthquake. We also delivered emergency relief goods, such as tents and blankets, on the same day. In addition, Japan decided to extend emergency assistance in the amount of $14 million to support Nepal. That assistance will soon be provided through international organizations, including United Nations humanitarian and development agencies.

The international community must respond to Nepal's urgent needs for recovery and reconstruction. In order to assist the country in its efforts towards recovery and reconstruction in a coordinated and effective manner, Japan announced its readiness to co-organize a donor conference together with Nepal and the Asian Development Bank. We also expect other Member States and international agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, to take part in the initiative.

I wish to conclude my statement by reaffirming our determination to always stand by the Government and the people of Nepal.

Mr. Anshor (Indonesia): I would like to begin by expressing once again Indonesia's deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal for their loss and the unfolding impacts caused by the earthquakes, which have resulted in an immeasurable amount of destruction and casualties. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have felt the impact of the earthquakes.

It is a difficult moment for the Government and the people of Nepal. Yet it has often been in moments such as this, when the human spirit is at its lowest ebb, that we have witnessed tremendous resilience. We know that the people of Nepal have a remarkable spirit and that they will rise above this enormous test of will. We hope that the international community will continue to support the recovery and rebuilding of Nepal so that the Government and its people will be able to restore their lives to normalcy and attain resilience.

I would like to commend the Government of Nepal for its continued commitment and leadership in rapidly delivering humanitarian assistance and coordinating the relief efforts in the country. In contribution to the emergency relief efforts, Indonesia, like many other countries, is sending medical, logistical and other teams and supplies to Nepal.

The resolution that was just adopted (resolution 69/280) should help accelerate the delivery of assistance by the United Nations system in Nepal so that the needs of the people can be met. That assistance should further strengthen the coordination within the United Nations system to ensure the effectiveness of delivery on the ground.

Indonesia is proud to have joined others in sponsoring today's resolution. I would like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Missions of Nepal and Spain for their commendable stewardship during the informal negotiations. Indonesia hopes that the resolution will provide a platform for partnership between the United Nations system and all humanitarian actors, including global and regional financial institutions, as well as the private sector, with a view to supporting the long-term efforts of the Government and the people of Nepal in building back better and strengthening their resilience to disasters.

Indonesia stands ready, together with the Government of Nepal and others, to undertake further cooperation, including in sharing best practices, and to support the efforts to strengthen disaster risk-reduction and resilience-building in Nepal.

Mr. Shearman (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by expressing the heartfelt condolences of the Government and the people of the United Kingdom to the Government and the people of Nepal and to all those who have lost family, friends and livelihoods in this dreadful tragedy.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and Spain for its leadership, together with Nepal, on resolution 69/280, which we have adopted today. The resolution is an important expression of global solidarity with the people who have suffered from this devastating disaster.

The United Kingdom is doing all it can to help Nepal recover from the earthquake. We are the largest international humanitarian donor to the response in Nepal, having provided $35 million to organizations working across affected districts, including $15 million to the United Nations flash appeal. We urge other donors to do more and urgently support the appeal.

Since the beginning of the crisis, we have provided logistical support to the Government of Nepal and the international response, including military aircraft. According to the humanitarian community in Nepal, additional logistical capacity is urgently required to meet the needs of affected communities ahead of the monsoon. The United Kingdom has offered and remains ready to make additional helicopter assets available to support the humanitarian response.

We strongly support efforts to support the long-term impacts of the earthquake, but our immediate focus must be on addressing immediate and urgent humanitarian needs. Swift action is required to address needs before the onset of the monsoon season, when roads will become impassable in some locations. Unless we collectively act quickly, the humanitarian context could deteriorate with the arrival of the monsoon. This scenario would lead to a further disaster — a protracted humanitarian response that could have been averted.

We believe, therefore, that the message is clear. Significant progress has been made, but there are still significant needs. As an international community, we need to act urgently and collectively in support of Nepal to address this remaining challenge and to avert even greater humanitarian need.

Mrs. Namgyel (Bhutan): At the outset, let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important plenary meeting to provide an update on the situation in Nepal. We welcome the adoption of

resolution 69/280, which we were pleased to co-sponsor. I would also like to place on record our thanks to Spain for having taken this initiative.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Nepal following the earthquake.

We wish once again to convey our deepest condolences to the people and Government of Nepal and to commend the Government of Nepal and the international community, in particular those on the ground in Nepal, for their dedicated and continued efforts in helping the people of Nepal get through this difficult situation. Bhutan, for its part, has made its own modest contributions to Nepal's relief efforts, based on the command of His Majesty the King and followed up with a personal visit by the Prime Minister of Bhutan, leading a team of relief personnel on 27 April.

As the Secretary-General's briefing made clear, Nepal has a difficult and challenging task ahead of it, not only to provide immediate relief, but also to undertake long-term reconstruction and rebuilding efforts. We understand the difficult circumstances and challenges under which Nepal would have to undertake these efforts and therefore urge the international community to continue to support Nepal in these difficult times. As a close friend and neighbour, and a fellow Himalayan country, Bhutan stands in solidarity and support with the people and Government of Nepal and wishes them strength as they work to overcome the challenging task of rebuilding their country.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his detailed briefing, which truly conveys the devastating impact of the earthquake in Nepal, which not only claimed a great many lives and wounded many people, but also destroyed much of the country. On behalf of the Government of Colombia, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal and to the families of the victims following this natural disaster whose devastating effects call for the support of the international community, as made clear in the report of the Secretary-General and the resolution we have just unanimously adopted under the leadership of Spain (resolution 69/280). The resolution clearly lays out how the international community must continue channelling its support for emergency relief and for reconstruction and development activities.

Colombia understands the difficult situation Nepal is going through and, in solidarity with the fragile situation of its people at this difficult time, on 5 May we responded to their call by making a contribution of $200,000 to the fund. We hope that, with the assistance and cooperation of the international community, we can help Nepal return to the path towards development.

Mr. Lennartsson (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to make a few additional remarks. Let me begin by reiterating Sweden's heartfelt condolences to the Government of Nepal and the families of all those who lost their lives and our deepest sympathy to the many injured as a result of this terrible earthquake in Nepal. As many speakers before me have pointed out, they are not alone in this hour of need.

Sweden was happy to co-sponsor resolution 69/280, adopted today, which demonstrates the global solidarity with the Government and people of Nepal. The Swedish Government responded swiftly to the disaster on 25 April by immediately deploying personnel and deciding on financial support. So far, Sweden has contributed approximately $10 million. A significant part of this support is in response to the recently launched United Nations flash appeal in areas such as water, sanitation and psychosocial support, but also support to children's education and protection. Furthermore, we are providing funds to the World Food Programme's logistical support to reach hard-to-reach areas. Sweden strongly encourages other donors to urgently fund the Flash Appeal, which remains severely underfunded at only 14 per cent. This is critical in order to avert further humanitarian needs.

Sweden has also contributed by sending 40 Swedish specialists to assist in the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, and experts in areas such as management, coordination, information and communication technology, logistics, construction, vehicles, temporary shelter and equipment. In addition, we have sent a group of Swedish specialists in coordination and needs assessments. As one of the major providers of voluntary core contributions to organization such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme, we stand by the United Nations efforts to provide a timely and efficient response to this disaster.

In closing, we would like to commend the Nepalese Government for its leadership in the response as well as for its foresight demonstrated by earlier investments in disaster preparedness. The Swedish Government

will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground and stands ready to commit further assistance to operations in Nepal.

Mr. Forés Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I reaffirm our solidarity with the people and Government of Nepal and extend our condolences to them upon the devastating human and material damage wrought by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May and their aftershocks. Cuba wishes to share its modest experience in dealing with natural disasters in the hope that it may be useful to the people of Nepal.

Following in our long tradition of solidarity with other nations facing difficulties, a team of 49 Cuban international experts specialized in disaster response and the management of major epidemics, including 25 doctors of various specialties, traveled to Kathmandu. The group of health professionals is now on the ground putting in place conditions for the deployment of a field hospital that will provide services, including a surgical unit, sterilization, an intensive care unit, diagnostic tools including X-rays, sterilization and a semi-automated ultrasonic laboratory, as well as consultation and rehabilitation services, which will be the most important work in the days ahead.

We reiterate our willingness to continue supporting, selflessly and in solidarity, disaster-stricken countries that are in need of assistance. Moreover, we call on the United Nations system and the international community to shoulder their responsibilities to developing countries by helping them to improve their disaster prevention and response capacities. In that regard, one efficient way of helping the brotherly people of Nepal would be to cover the financial costs of its external debt. Our delegation fully supports the draft resolution under consideration and is one of its sponsors.

Ms. Ponce (Philippines): At the outset, allow me to express once again the Philippines' deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Nepal for the terrible loss of lives, extensive damage to property and destruction of Nepal's important cultural sites caused by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May. We also express our condolences and sympathy to the people of its neighbouring countries, Bangladesh, China and India, who also suffered loss of lives and property. The Philippines affirms its support for Nepal and thanks Spain for its initiative and coordination of this resolution, which we are honoured to co-sponsor.

The second earthquake that struck Nepal showed us that disasters do not wait. International assistance is critical from the onset, and we are heartened by the spirit of solidarity, cooperation and willingness that suffused the negotiation of resolution 69/280. As the resolution equally emphasizes, relief efforts are but a part of the scale of humanitarian assistance needed. They must be accompanied from the onset by reconstruction, rehabilitation and development programmes that are anchored in the principles of resilience and building back better. And as pointed out by Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos at last week's briefing, risk awareness and reduction must be built into those efforts. In so doing, we particularly need to be mindful of the special needs and challenges of Nepal as a least developed, landlocked country emerging from a conflict.

We also agree that there is a need to direct assistance to prevention by further strengthening national capacities at all levels, including effective and efficient governance and institutions, and to also integrating a gender perspective and the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including children and older people, and in all relevant aspects related to disaster management and rehabilitation. In these, an important guidepost is the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Our Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has deployed a rescue team to assist in the retrieval and rehabilitation operations. The Philippine Red Cross has also sent two teams, including a medical team that has joined the Canadian Red Cross in setting up an emergency field hospital focusing on providing maternal and child health care. We intend to further assist in the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

As a country that experienced the magnitude of destruction wrought by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the Philippines is well aware of the vital importance of coordinated humanitarian assistance from the international community in such situations of natural disasters, not just for the aid and expertise provided, but for lifting the spirits of those affected, in the knowledge that there is a community behind them and with them. We are optimistic that, with the leadership of the Government of Nepal and the coordinated assistance of the international community, the challenges of this tragic disaster will be adequately addressed.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for his briefing. I also commend Spain for its leadership in introducing resolution 69/280.

On behalf of the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I wish to express my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal for the losses of life, injuries and the huge damages caused by the devastating earthquake of 25 April and the subsequent earthquake of 12 May. As Saadi Shirazi, the great Iranian poet of the thirteenth century, wrote,

> "Humans are the limbs of the same body, and are from the same essence in their creation. When the conditions of the time hurt one of these parts, other parts will suffer from discomfort as well. If you are indifferent about the misery of others, it is not deserving to call you a human being."

The people and the Government of Iran, who have suffered immensely from natural disasters, including some big earthquakes in the past decades, share the pain of their Nepalese brothers and sisters. Iran has dispatched emergency humanitarian supplies to the quake-stricken people of Nepal, and we remain committed to further assisting the victims of this tragedy.

Mr. Munir (Pakistan): I take this opportunity to reiterate the profound condolences of the Government and the people of Pakistan to the Government and the people of Nepal at the colossal loss of life and property resulting from the 25 April earthquake and its continuing aftershocks. We stand in solidarity with our Nepalese brothers and sisters at this difficult time. I would also like to thank Nepal and Spain for steering the important resolution 69/280, which signals the resolve and commitment of the international community to providing all needed assistance to Nepal and to supporting it along the long-term road to recovery. We were pleased to co-sponsor the resolution and hope that its promise and commitment will be fully translated into action.

As a fellow State member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region, Pakistan immediately responded to the dire situation in Nepal by rushing emergency relief goods and critical medical supplies. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif issued a special directive to provide all possible assistance to Nepal in a timely manner. Our relief assistance, which is still continuing, includes the establishment of a 30-bed field hospital, a 38-member urban search-and-rescue team with sophisticated equipment, and 10 aeroplane-loads of relief goods, including medicines, rice, ready-to-eat meals, tents and blankets. Nepalese medical students studying in Pakistani medical colleges have also been assisted to return home to help in the relief operations. The chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan has visited Nepal and met with Nepalese leaders and officials to assess the situation and the need for further assistance from Pakistan.

In conclusion, let me reassure the Government and the people of Nepal that Pakistan stands ready to provide additional assistance as per their needs.

Mr. Haque (Bangladesh): I would like to express our gratitude to Spain and Nepal for introducing resolution 69/280. Bangladesh is pleased to have co-sponsored the resolution.

On behalf of the people of Bangladesh, we express our deepest condolences to the victims of the devastating earthquake that shook Nepal on 25 April and then on 12 May. We hope that the people and Government of Nepal will be able to overcome their losses with the help of Nepal's friendly neighbours. When the earthquake shook Nepal, it also shook many areas of Bangladesh, where thousands of people took refuge in open fields to avoid the aftershocks. A few people died in Bangladesh as well. The honourable President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh expressed their deep condolences for the losses caused by the devastating earthquake in Nepal, one of our closest neighbours and a valued member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

In the wake of the recent devastating earthquake in Nepal, the Government of Bangladesh was among the first countries to send a humanitarian assistance team to Nepal. The Government of Bangladesh took an immediate decision to send relief materials and a medical team immediately. All the airports in Bangladesh have been opened to foreign countries who want to send relief materials to Nepal. The Government of Bangladesh has already talked to India to ensure that the relief materials could go to Nepal through our Banglabandha land port using Indian territories.

Bangladesh was one of the first countries to send a medical team, comprising 70 members of medical donors plus technicians and nurses. The medical team was deployed in the Lalitpur district of Kathmandu to provide medical treatment to the earthquake victims. As of today, the Bangladeshi medical team has provided medical services to a few thousand Nepalese. In addition, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed an

additional 10,000 metric tons of rice and an additional quantity of water to earthquake-hit Nepal. Besides the Bangladeshi Government, the headquarters of many non-governmental organizations in Bangaladesh have extended their support by sending relief materials to the earthquake victims in Nepal. A concert for Nepal will be held on 21 May in an effort to raise funds for the victims of the earthquake of Nepal.

The people of Bangladesh feel strongly for the friendly and courageous people of Nepal, and Bangladesh will remain at the side of the disaster-struck people of Nepal and provide all assistance possible.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his important briefing. I also thank my colleagues, the Ambassadors of Spain and Nepal, for having proposed resolution 69/280, which we fully endorse as co-sponsors.

Today the international community comes together to acknowledge and offer our deepest sympathies to the people of Nepal, who are reeling from a recent series of earthquakes that have caused thousands of deaths and affected millions more. The United Arab Emirates would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening the important briefing on this urgent humanitarian situation facing Nepal and the broader region.

We have over 100,000 Nepalese living throughout the United Arab Emirates, who work alongside people of over 200 different nationalities represented in our country. When a shocking tragedy such as this happens, United Arab Emirates citizens and residents feel the human impact right away. Our hearts go out to those who lost friends and family as a result of the earthquakes, and we are keen to do as much as we can to bring people to safety and provide humanitarian aid to provide immediate relief and mitigate the impact of the disruption.

Upon learning of the earthquake, 87 members of the United Arab Emirates search-and-rescue team from the Abu Dhabi police department were deployed to Nepal. Working closely with the United Nations Disaster Assessment Coordinator, our team provided logistical support, including the use of unmanned drones to capture footage of hard-to-reach areas to assess the integrity of damaged buildings in Nepal. Team members also offered medical services to patients, as well as equipment to hospitals and training to Nepalese doctors and nurses. Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos met with our teams on the ground and offered valuable insights on specific needs that we responded to. Philanthropic organizations within the United Arab Emirates mobilized resources quickly to provide humanitarian aid to those in remote areas. With a generous donation from Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Woman's Union, the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Authority has been able to provide aid to over 30,000 families throughout Nepal. Our contributions from across the United Arab Emirates have resulted in the deployment of humanitiarian aid to remote areas of Nepal and the construction of field hospitals to help in the ongoing relief operations.

We need to do more and we will. Today our focus is on relief, but we should not forget the role that preparation can play in future crises like this. We should continue to invest in countries efforts' to invest in disaster risk reduction so that they can become more resilient to disasters. In this regard, we echo the statement made by the observer of the European Union that adequate safeguards must be put in place to protect the most vulnerable, specifically women, children and boys. It is our hope that those affected by this earthquake will soon be able to return to their homes and life as normal as soon as possible. In order to do this the international community must not turn its focus away from this humanitarian crisis too soon. There is still so much more to be done.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): On behalf of the Government and people of Nepal and myself, I wish to express our deepest gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this meeting today at this crucial hour in support of Nepal in the wake of a series of earthquakes that have left the country devastated. I thank you for your opening statement, highlighting the need on the ground, and I also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing, with its graphic account of the dire situation on the ground and of the needs, including those of the remotest parts of Nepal, at this hour.

On 25 April, three weeks ago, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal. Together with dozens of powerful aftershocks of up to 6.8 in magnitude, it has consumed over 8,000 lives, injured over 18,000 people and rendered more than 600,000 houses uninhabitable. The earthquake left 3 million people without shelter in Kathmandu valley and several outlying districts to the west, north and east. Two days ago, just as we commenced

the transition to relief and recovery, Nepal was struck again by a quake nearly as powerful. That earthquake, with its own set of aftershocks, tore down the already debilitated buildings and structures that had withstood the first episode. Thousands of houses in the outlying districts in the north-east and east of Kathmandu valley have been levelled; hundreds of people have been killed and many injured. While the earthquakes have imposed havoc and ruin on Kathmandu, their effect on rural Nepal, sequestered and beyond the reach of immediate help, is on a scale scarcely imaginable.

Amid this crisis, the show of support from Member States and from all corners of the globe — both institutional and individual — has been tremendous. We are grateful for the outpouring of sympathy and solidarity we have received. The concern of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the determination with which he sought to respond to the crisis, both personally and through the United Nations system, are highly appreciated. The visit to Nepal by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos, together with the visits by the leaders of the European Union and the World Food Programme, brought moral support to the ground, while the people already on the ground are working tirelessly around the clock.

It has been deeply moving to witness the generosity and spontaneity with which the first responders acted in the aftermath of the 25 April earthquake. We are grateful to our immediate neighbours, India and China, and all other countries — from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation member States to our long-standing development partners and a raft of multilateral organizations and institutions, from the United Nations to the European Union. These actors have directly contributed to the rescue and relief operations. Hundreds of people were rescued alive and treated. Many more friends have contributed since then. Nepal cherishes deeply these friendships, which have lent us strength and hope in the face of this great calamity, but it is imperative to remember that it is not only Nepali nationals who have suffered. Our hearts go out to the families of our friendly countries' nationals who succumbed to the disaster. We hope for their quick recovery.

The scale of destruction of physical and social infrastructure is immense. In the districts hardest hit, hardly a school or health post still stands. The roads to these areas were shut off and access to vital public services cut off. The rescue and relief effort under way has been hampered by landslides and heavy rainfall time and again. The prospects for the future look grim. Tens of thousands who had just crossed the poverty line run the risk of falling back into absolute poverty. Past development achievements, including the progress on the Millennium Development Goals, stand to suffer major setbacks and our hope to graduate from least developed country status by 2022 may be severely diminished.

Beyond the economic and human impact is the pain of a lost past, our historical, cultural and archaeological heritage, which endowed us with values and an identity that have been damaged, perhaps decimated, by the powerful shocks we have experienced. It is heartbreaking to see centuries-old monuments and temples, many of them World Heritage Sites, reduced to rubble.

In his briefing, the Secretary-General underscored that the immediate and most exigent challenge is providing shelter for the millions who are now homeless. The monsoon season is fast approaching, and temporary shelters must be set up in the next few weeks. We need to rehabilitate bridges and roads and reinstate schools and health posts. We should also do everything possible to enable us not to miss the planting season, which is just around the corner. The Government of Nepal is committed to yoking the relief and recovery phase of post-disaster management to the longer-term goals of rebuilding and reconstruction. For that, it will mobilize already existing central and district-level mechanisms, which will need the means necessary to ensuring that the recovery can progress seamlessly towards rebuilding and reconstruction, avoiding any unnecessary duplication of effort or waste of scarce resources.

On 27 April, the Government appealed to the international community for assistance and set up a national reconstruction fund, consisting initially of $2 billion, with $200 million earmarked from its own resources, for the immediate rebuilding of vital infrastructure, homes and heritage sites. A full assessment of the damage and financing needs for reconstruction is being conducted by our national planning commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and other development partners. The eventual total needed could amount to several billion dollars. The Government is counting on the generous support of Nepal's development partners to enable it to meet these

challenges. To that end, we welcome the launch of the United Nations pledge appeal and call on all Member States to contribute generously in order to provide the earthquake's victims with lifesaving assistance in the next three months, without which the humanitarian situation will be dire.

I would like to assure all the friends of Nepal here today that, just as they have hoped and prayed for and expressed confidence in our ability to achieve, the Nepalese people will emerge stronger from this crisis. We are determined to do it. For that, we need greater support and cooperation, particularly in the form of substantial, sustained financial resources from our international development partners.

Nepal has been trying to prepare for disasters such as this for years. Although we have enacted laws, established institutions and stocked supplies and harvests for several years, in the end our capacity has fallen far short of what is required. With a landlocked and least-developed mountain economy that has recently emerged from conflict, Nepal could not prepare adequately for a disaster of this magnitude. Yet under the circumstances, the Government has acted promptly to mobilize its own resources and coordinate outside support as efficiently as possible.

Nepal is in a precarious situation at this time, wading uncertainly in waters that are too deep. But we have full confidence in the support of our friends and in our own strength and determination to move past and recover from this calamity and build a better home. In the midst of chaos and in the wake of disaster, it is inspiring to see how selflessly the Nepali people have come together, at home and abroad, to come to one another's aid. It is inspiring because it is an augury of change. The hope that Nepalis have for their country, the work they are putting into rebuilding Nepal and the confidence they have in its resilience — these are the ingredients of progress. A country mired in a protracted political transition for several years is now witnessing an unprecedented unity of purpose among political parties and leaders for facing the challenge together, creating a political climate conducive to rapid social and economic development. On 13 May, the Constituent Assembly, which is also the country's national parliament, resolved unanimously that all its constituents will rise to the challenge and guide our country out of this catastrophe.

We are confident that resolution 69/280, adopted this morning with an overwhelming number of sponsors, will be instrumental in facilitating any and all initiatives that will be needed to realize that dream. We are grateful to the Spanish leadership for bringing the United Nations membership together in global solidarity with Nepal by way of the resolution. I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Román Oyarzun Marchesi, the Permanent Representative of Spain and my good friend, for his efforts and for his moving introduction of the resolution. I would also like to take this opportunity to express once again the Government of Nepal's deep appreciation to all friendly countries for their efforts to finally shape the resolution, and to thank all delegations from the bottom of my heart for their steadfast support to Nepal and for the adoption of today's resolution, making us truly feel that Nepal is not alone.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 69.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.